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and of England, took their genius to that extremely popular institution, the theatre. They wrote . . . for mankind" (p. 87). The essays on Shelley and Coleridge are hearteningly good; the analyses of Mr. Saintsbury, Mr. Gosse and Professor Babbitt as critics are sagacious; the paper on Georgian poets is, on the whole, as right in its conclusions as in its spirit; and the "temporary criticism" of Tennyson prescribes very frankly and kindly some of the minus signs that must go to a final evaluation. Mr. Lynd has given us a really memorable collection here of some thoroughly interesting reviews and essays. G. H. C.

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MODERN THOUGHT IN THE GERMAN LYRIC POETS FROM GOETHE TO DEHMEL. By Friederich Bruns. Madison: University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, Number 13. 1921. Pp. 101.

The soul of a people lives in its lyrics; consequently this compact discussion is at this time particularly welcome as affording to the American public (although it will be read chiefly by university people) these glimpses of insight into the German mind. The discussion has been limited for the most part to three problems: "the conception of the deity, the question of the freedom of the will, and the valuation of life". But "an absolute limitation to lyric verse for the sake of mere consistency" did not seem "feasible nor desirable". What happens in one sphere or department of literature tends sooner or later to spread wavelike throughout the entire area, and this limitation to lyric verse would therefore have been impracticable; so the writer notes (page 13):—

"In the nineteenth century we have instead the song of suffering *Das Lied vom Leide*. In Germany it is the century of the rebirth of tragedy: not only did Kleist, Grillparzer, Hebbel, Richard Wagner, and Hauptmann create the modern tragic drama, but the great tragic poets of the past became vital factors once more, above all Sophocles and Shakespeare."

Using lyric as a guide, then, we are to follow this clue of song through the maze of the past century or two, stopping to note such signposts here and there as Goethe, Romanticism, Welt-

schmerz, Realism and a New Faith in Life, Pessimism, the New Optimism—a development parallel, one might add, to what has occurred in other literatures. Language creates an artificial bar. The influence of Hebbel is still to be felt in its proper intensity on our own literature and perhaps that wave has swept by. He is here awarded fuller recognition than some critics think he merits, but he is a very great poet in spite of their dislike, and the present writer, without troubling about his philosophy, had long ago found enjoyment in his sombre yet powerful dramas. Platen, too, an old favorite, receives place in the Lyric Canon; few German poets drew a more direct inspiration from the Greeks and fewer still have been so successful in the adaptation of classical metres to the German language. Nietzsche's debt to Hebbel is sufficiently indicated, but from darkness he draws a lurid light; his *Uebermensch* finds a curious and imperfect parallel in Thomas Hardy's *The God Beyond*. But it must be admitted that these philosophies are often pursued with more enthusiasm than understanding, and that to the poets philosophy plunges all too readily into mysticism. Professor Bruns has drawn a path, however, that can be followed and his interpretations of the writers of lyric constitute a genuine service to criticism.

J. B. EDWARDS.

Wells College.

PLATO'S STUDIES AND CRITICISMS OF THE POETS. By Carleton Lewis Brownson. Boston: The Gorham Press. 1920. Pp. 157.

When a philosopher expresses his opinion of the poets, even to-day, there is apt to be a shrinking of sensitive souls. The poetic instinct and the critical faculty are more likely to 'mix' than to mingle when they meet. Doubly difficult must it be when the philosopher is a poet also; yet in this case his animadversions will be aimed rather against the content than the spirit of poetry that excites his protest. At the same time there exists a certain kinship between poetry and philosophy: one shapes an ideal world, the other insists that we try to live in it.

Professor Brownson has initiated an inquiry into Plato's studies of the poets and his condemnation of them, his final criticism of poetry and his estimate of the function of poetry in the